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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Resource Management Staff

26 August 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

Assistant Deputy Director for Operations
National Security Agency

SUBJECT: Project HOOFBAT (U)

REFERENCE: Your Letter to D/DCI/RM dated 28 May 1980; Same Subject
(Serial N 0531)

1. Thank you very much for sending us the study on the role of SIGINT in the Iranian crisis of 1978-1979. This study has been read by several members of the Resource Management Staff whose reactions and comments I am summarizing below. (S/CCO)

2. We all agreed that the HOOFBAT Report provides an excellent exposition of the manner in which NSA goes about its business of determining links to be assessed, exploiting such links, processing the intelligence information derived from them, and disseminating that information expeditiously and in a "marketable" format to key consumers in the analytical and policymaking community. This is one of the clearest expositions we have yet seen, and the charts (with the accompanying textual explanation) such as figure 2.1 (Overview of SIGINT Collection and Operations Management by NSA), are of great value. The HOOFBAT Study, regardless of its ultimate conclusions and recommendations, should be required reading for all new members of this Staff in order to familiarize themselves with the mission and functioning of NSA. (S/CCO)

3. If there is indeed, as the Study states, an unfavorable impact on the credibility and acceptability of NSA's product because the Agency's collection problems and techniques are not well known, a Study such as this should help to correct this problem. (S/CCO)

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4. Although the study goes into considerable detail of NSA's role in providing useful intelligence in the Iranian crisis, its supposition that that experience might form the basis on which steps could be taken to improve the likelihood of early warning of future impending crisis is not substantiated. (S/CCO)

5. Reference is made in the Study to a "Community predisposition in favor of HUMINT, especially attache reporting." If there is such a predisposition toward HUMINT, we in the Intelligence Community Staff have seen very little evidence that analysts and policymakers rely heavily on attache reporting. This may have been so for a given period of time in the Iranian crisis, but this should not be considered a suitable precedent. (S/CCO)

6. The Report does an excellent job in reaccounting the links and lanes accessed by NSA during the crisis; it would, however, have been helpful if one had been told what requirements had been levied on NSA prior to the crisis, what links were being routinely tapped at that time, and what the increment in disseminated reporting was. (S/CCO)

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